



# The Arboretum Bulletin



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## IMPORTANT

Mr. C. O. Dexter, an amateur grower of national reputation, has given the Arboretum a carload of his choicest rhododendrons, Clinton azaleas and kalmias. This gift contains many of the finest grown in America, most of which are not in commerce and therefore of far more than ordinary value. The freight cost on this car from Mr. Dexter's estate on Cape Cod, Massachusetts, to Seattle is \$524. As the Arboretum Foundation has no available funds for this expense we are asking contributions from individuals and organizations to defray this expense. May we count on you for assistance in this worthwhile project? Immediate action is necessary to take advantage of this wonderful offer and your assistance will be greatly appreciated. Make checks payable to Arboretum Foundation and send same to Arboretum Foundation headquarters, 6620 White Building, Seattle. For further information apply to Mrs. First Johnson or to the undersigned.

HERBERT IHRIG,  
Chairman, Rhododendron Committee

## RHODODENDRONS FOR THE ARBORETUM

Herbert Ihrig, chairman of the Rhododendron Committee of the Arboretum, who is centering his garden efforts these days towards making the rhododendron collection the finest in the United States and one of the finest in the world, is already placing orders for the series which to date have found sponsors among garden clubs and other public-spirited bodies and citizens.

The University of Washington will give to the Arboretum the Albiflorum series, which contains but one species, a

rather distinct form, native to the Rocky Mountains from Oregon to British Columbia and eastward to Colorado. It is a six-foot deciduous shrub with small white flowers.

Endre Ostbo, of Medina, who grows many fine rhododendrons, sponsors the Auriculatum series, which has two species, both regarded as highly desirable garden acquisitions. One is *Rhododendron Auriculatum*, of late blooming habit, and the other *Rhododendron Griersonianum*, noted for its distinctive flower color, and said by Clement Bowers, rhododendron authority, to be different from that of any other rhododendron.

The Boothii series, sponsored by the Lake Washington Garden Club, is a Himalayan group of small shrubs, which come from Bhutan, Yunnan and Upper Burma. Yellow is the common color of the flowers, which vary from three-quarters to one and one-half inches long. The plants are from two to four feet high.

The Cinnabarinum series, while unable to withstand the climatic conditions which prevail in most sections of the eastern United States, does well in England and will undoubtedly be happy in our mild Puget Sound climate. The colors are quite unusual and described as cinnabar red. There is a variety with orange or yellow tipped red flowers and another with flowers of rosy red. The Washington State Federation of Garden Clubs sponsors this series.

The Camelliaeflorum series is another which comes from the Himalayas and while recognized as tender has no trouble in living and thriving in our climate. Mr. H. Lem is the sponsor.

The Canitschaticum series consists of three species of tiny plants from the Arctic region of the Pacific Coast. *Rhododendron Canitschaticum* is said to be the only species in cultivation. It is looked upon as one of the rhododendrons which finds it rather difficult to take kindly to civilization. Mrs. T. C. Frye, fine grower of dwarf rhododendrons, sponsors this series.

The Carolinianum series, sponsored by Herbert Ihrig,

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is described as a group of medium sized North American evergreen rhododendrons. Members of this group are exceedingly useful for horticultural purposes. Rhododendrons minus of this series have been known to reach a height of twenty feet, but the average height is ten feet. One of the charms of this group is that the different species have different periods for blooming, with the result that there is a continuity of blossoms extending over quite a period.

The Edgeworth series, sponsored by Endre Ostbo and H. G. Ihrig, and which comes from the Upper Burma and Yunnan countries, must have mild climate in order to grow well out of doors, so again we will have a fine rhododendron which will make itself quite at home in our Arboretum. Considerable difference exists between species in size of plants, size of flowers and color.

The Glaucum series, another gift of the Lake Washington Garden Club, consists mostly of small shrubs, which grow from ten to thirteen thousand feet above sea-level in China. Four of the species have yellow flowers and five pink or purple flowers. Some have aromatic foliage.

The Seabrifolium series, the Sunnydale Garden Club's gift to the Arboretum, consists of smallish evergreen shrubs with flowers ranging from white to pink and crimson in color, which bloom early in the spring. The series includes *Rhododendron Seabrifolium*, which comes forth with its flowers of pink or white as early as February.

The Micranthum series, sponsored by Herbert Ihrig, consists of only one series, a very distinct form, covering a wide range in Northern China and showing no affinity with any other rhododendron.

Yunnanense subseries of Triflorum series, which the North End Garden Club is sponsoring, includes the lovely *Rhododendron Yunnanense*, which has a high standing in English rhododendron circles, is a splendid doer in the Pacific Northwest, and is regarded by many rhododendron authorities as the best of the Triflorum series.

The flowers of the Grande series, sponsored by the Three Tree Point Garden Club, run from white and pale yellow, to rose, red and magenta. The flowers average about two inches in length and are generally borne in fair-sized trusses of twenty or more. The leaves are evergreen and sometimes two feet long. *Rhododendron Giganteum*, of this series, is the tallest rhododendron known, sometimes reaching a height of eighty feet.

The Heliolepis series, which the Seahurst Garden Club is giving to the Arboretum, includes species which grow to a height of thirty feet, with flowers ranging through violet, mauve and red in color. This series does well in the Pacific Northwest in most any location, but back east some of the species are unable to stand up under the winter cold.

The Fortunei series, which Mr. Charles O. Dexter, of Sandwich, Mass., outstanding in the United States as a private grower of the world's finest rhododendrons, has so

graciously consented to sponsor, contains some of the best known and most horticulturally valuable species. Most of the species come from China and are from six to twenty-five feet high. The series is characterized by large-sized flowers of white, pink and rose. While well known in England over a long period and most highly regarded by the best growers of that country, most of the species of this series are rather new in America. Some of them are being grown on the Atlantic Coast, but only in certain localities and under protected conditions. Out here they are quite happy.

Subseries Campylocarpum and subseries Martinianum of the Thomsonii series will have a place in *Rhododendron Glen*, thanks to that fine gardener, Mrs. Gladys France Baker. *Rhododendron Campylocarpum* is spoken of by the great English collector, Kingdom Ward, as one of the Himalaya's most precious gifts. It is highly esteemed as the best yellow flowered species for general cultivation. Subseries Martinianum includes *Rhododendron Erysiphon*, with creamy white or very pale rose flowers, and *Rhododendron Martinianum*.

### JOIN THIS TOUR THROUGH THE ARBORETUM

Those who wish to make a trip through the Arboretum grounds will have the opportunity to do so April 8. It will be an official tour and in charge of Arboretum officials. You do not have to be a member of the Arboretum Foundation to take advantage of this invitation to join the inspection party. The tour starts promptly at 10 a. m. from the intersection of the East Madison Street car line and the Lake Washington Boulevard. It will be well worth your while to make the trip for you will have a splendid opportunity to see just what has been done to date in the way of planning and planting.

### THE FRANKLINIA SECRET

Through the generosity of the Country Home and Garden Circle of Shadow Lake, near Renton, a *Gordonia Alatamaha* tree has been planted in the Arboretum. This tree, popularly known as Franklinia, and often referred to as the "lost tree of the Georgia Swamps", will undoubtedly attract much attention from Arboretum visitors because of its rarity, as well as the beauty of its foliage and its flowers. The first flowers open in August and it is not unusual for the tree to continue with its bloom until the fall frosts come along.

The young leaves unfold a charming, delicate, bronzy



red; at maturity they are five to six inches long by about one-third as wide, a rich, dark green with red veining. In autumn the whole tree blazes with rich, warm color. The flower buds are balls covered with whitish green satin. When as large as marbles they unfold.

The tree, a native of the state of Georgia, has lived like a hermit, in one spot, away from the eyes of the world for one hundred and twenty-five years. During the last twenty years botanists and naturalists have made a thorough search for it, in vain. Several years ago an expedition composed of members from the Smithsonian Institution, the United States Forest Service and the Forest Experiment Station in Asheville made an exhaustive hunt of the swamp but failed to find it.

The tree, according to Charles Newton Elliott, writing in *Nature Magazine*, was found by William Bartram, whose father was Royal Botanist to King George III of England and who also was an eminent botanist of his day. Bartram came over from England in 1773 and traveled through the southeastern states for five years, during which time he recorded many interesting facts about the flora and fauna of the southern states and made a wide collection of plants.

Bartram records in his "Travels" the discovery and naming of this tree: "I employed myself in revisiting the several districts of Georgia where I noted the most curious subjects; collecting them together and shipping them to England. I had the opportunity of observing the new flowering shrub, resembling the *Gordonia*. On first observing the fruitification and habit of this tree, I was inclined to believe it a species of *Gordonia*; but afterwards, upon stricter examination, and comparing its flowers and fruit with those of the *Gordonia Lasianthus*, I presently found striking characteristics abundantly sufficient to separate it from that genus and to establish it at the head of a new tribe, which we have honored with the name of the illustrious Dr. Benjamin Franklin, *Franklinia Alatamaha*."

Cuttings from this plant discovered by William Bartram were taken to his father, who then lived in Philadelphia, where they were planted in the city park. Later it found its way down to the Arnold Arboretum of Boston. As Bartram mentioned, some of the cuttings also went to England, where they were placed in cultivation. One reached Chevy Chase near Washington, D. C. Botanists following Bartram determined the *Franklinia* to be a true *Gordonia*, as Bartram at first thought it to be, and restored the name *Gordonia Alatamaha*, the name referring to its habitat. It bears its common name *Franklinia*.

As the explorer suggested the occurrence of this species is singular and unaccountable. It has never been found native anywhere else in the world except on these few acres in the *Alatamaha* swamps. It is a tree that has been hidden in the semi-tropical vegetation of southern Georgia for over a century and a half. Many more years

may pass before it comes to light. One wonders how such a plant came into existence and why it was confined to only two or three small acres on the wide face of the earth.

### A GREAT TRIBUTE

Here in a few words is what Dr. E. D. Merrill, administrator of botanical collections at Harvard University, and widely known botanist, thinks of the possibilities of the University of Washington Arboretum. Arnold Arboretum is under the control of Harvard University. Dr. Donald Wyman of Arnold Arboretum, while on a tour of the Pacific Coast some months ago, spent some time in a study of our Arboretum. On his return to Boston, Dr. Merrill wrote President Seig, in which he said, among other kind things:

"The Arboretum in Seattle is situated in an ideal spot for doing the very same thing on the West Coast that the Arnold Arboretum has been doing in the East. Because of your favorable climate you can grow thousands of species that are not hardy in the East, and thus your Arboretum has the added advantages of being able to grow and display a far wider selection of material than any other institution of its kind in this country."

### GIFTS TO THE ARBORETUM

From November 1, 1937, up to and including January 1, 1938, the Arboretum received as gifts 50,000 bulbs, 3,500 plants and 5,000 seeds. The gifts included 1,000 bulbs from U. of W. Nursery, College of Forestry; 11,000 *Narcissus* bulbs from Jan's Bulb Farm, Bothell; 5,000 *Scilla* bulbs from A. B. Flagg, Seattle; 12,000 *Narcissus* and *Iris* bulbs from Charles Orton, Sumner; 16,000 *Scilla* and other bulbs from Mrs. F. S. Flickinger, Richmond Beach; 3,000 *Iris* bulbs from Fred Delkin, Medina, and 46 Eastern native Solomon Seal tubers from Mrs. Gladys France Baker.

Plant contributors included Mrs. Edith Banghart, Medina; Mr. Aubrey White, Spokane; Morton Arboretum; H. E. Andrews, Bothell Highway; Bonnell Nursery, Seattle; California Branch, Garden Clubs of America (ten Tree peonies); Mrs. O. B. Thorgrimson, Seattle; University of Washington Drug Garden; University of Washington College of Pharmacy; University of Washington College of Forestry; Rhododendron Committee, Arboretum Foundation; Fred Leissler, Seattle; Miss Betty Atwood, Seattle, and M. G. Kastengren, Seattle (12,000 cuttings). Included in the seed contributors were E. S. Harper of Duke University, H. Phil Bradner, Bedford, Indiana; Arnold Arboretum; Duke University; Charles Keene, Seattle, and Mrs. O. B. Thorgrimson.

